

## **Healthy Eating on a Budget**

Healthy eating doesn't have to be expensive – with a little nutritional 'know how', careful planning and some prudent shopping, you can eat healthily without spending a fortune.

As we get older, our nutritional requirements begin to change and although the rules for a healthy balanced diet remain the same, our need for certain nutrients such as protein, calcium, iron folic acid and vitamin D may increase according to the Kellogg Foundation.

Because we're usually less active than younger members of the family, as we get older we need fewer calories than we once did and may find our appetite dwindling. With a proper diet and as much exercise as we can comfortably manage, however, there's no reason why any of us shouldn't stay healthy and active into our old age.

Here are a few tips to help you balance your budget as well as your diet.

- Write a weekly menu plan can help to avoid wasting money on 'impulse' buys and unnecessary items.
- Write a list before you go shopping...and stick to it.
- Choose loose rather than pre-packed fruits, vegetables and salads. They're often a lot cheaper than packaged options.
- Make the most of seasonal fruit and vegetables – not only are they cheaper, they'll also be fresher.
- Avoid added value products such as canned tomatoes with herbs and garlic. It's much cheaper to add a pinch of dried herbs to a can of regular tomatoes.
- Take advantage of special offers, but only if they're on products that you know you'll use.
- Compare prices – most supermarkets now give the price per kilogram.
- Although lean meat is more expensive than fatty cuts, it's much better nutritional value. Buy lean meat and bulk out dishes like shepherds pie and lasagna by adding vegetables, beans or pulses such as lentils or kidney beans.
- Try to avoid convenience foods. Things like ready grated cheese and pre-washed vegetables are almost always more expensive.

Snacking isn't a bad habit. In fact, it can often be the most efficient way of getting the nutrients you need throughout the day, especially if you lose your appetite for the traditional 'three meals a day.'

There's no doubt the pleasure of a good meal is doubled when it's shared and it's all too easy to give up on creative cuisine and healthy meals when you spend most of your time on your own. With a little thought though, you can still eat well and enjoy your food, even if it's just dinner for one.